

New group seeks to develop mariculture industry in Alaska

The enormous potential of mariculture in Alaska has resulted in the formation of an organization whose goal is to promote the industry in Alaska.

The Alaska Mariculture Association was created by individuals, companies and municipalities interested in the development of a sound and stable sea farming industry. AMA is designed to advocate public policies favoring mariculture development and to assist the industry by acting as a clearinghouse for information.

The full spectrum of mariculture activities — shellfish, finfish and sea vegetable production — will be covered by AMA. The organization hopes to put potential sea farmers in touch with equipment suppliers, broodstock sources and investors, as well as provide marketing and quality information.

The AMA's initial goals include approval of legislation providing a firm

legal basis for mariculture and a regulatory process conducive to the needs of the mariculture industry. Legislative goals also include strong protections for wild stocks.

The board of directors includes President Paul Fuhs, mayor of Unalaksa; Vice President Robin Larsson, president of the Alaska Shellfish Growers Association and operator of an oyster farm in Wrangell; Secretary/Treasurer Richard Harris, vice president of resource planning and administration of Sealaska Corp.; and Timothy Ward, a former commercial fisherman and biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game who currently is director of the Central Kodiak Archipelago Scallop Farming Project in Port Lions.

More information on AMA may be obtained by writing to the Alaska Mariculture Association, Box 020704, Juneau 99802-0704.